

Regulatory Field Offices -- where the customers need them

The Corps' regulatory program is fairly large in scope and in intricacy. The program's initial focus expanded from primarily protecting navigation interest to include protecting the quality of the Nation's waters, including wetlands. This is done through the issuance of permits, where both the protection and use of water resources are considered. What that means is that any entity planning to work in navigable waters of the United States, or to discharge dredge or fill material into waters of the U.S., including wetlands, must first obtain a permit from the Corps of Engineers.

The Charleston District is responsible for regulating permit activities throughout South Carolina and, like many Corps districts, has field offices out in areas to maintain adequate coverage of the state. That is why the district recently established two field offices, in Columbia and Conway.

In August 1999, the Regulatory Division opened its first field office in Columbia, S.C. The office is tasked with the responsibility of environmental review and enforcement for the Corps' Regulatory Program in the midlands and upstate of South Carolina. It serves 28 counties or approximately half the state. This



Kevin Montgomery, Conway field office team member, tests the soil on a permit applicant's property for wetland indicators. (photo by Elizabeth Jackson, Charleston District)

area extends northwest of a line from Aiken County, across the sand hills of South Carolina to Darlington County.

The initial personnel hired for the office consisted of one regulatory biologist with a second to be hired in December 1999. Les Parker, a biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, was hired to open and establish the office. As the office opened and before the furniture had arrived, projects began to flow in for

review. If not for computers with e-mail, cell phones with voice mail, pagers and even snail-mail, the office would not have succeeded.

Parker said he began a ritual of mobility and interdependence which continues today, where three days a week in the field and two days a week in the office are often necessary to accomplish the office's mission.

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Charleston District Dispatch

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Commander's Corner



Lt. Col. Peter W. Mueller
Charleston District Commander

Our reputation is not determined simply by **What We Do** but also by **How We Do It!** As a team and individually, we are constantly challenged to **Accomplish Our Mission**. Our mission includes many diverse tasks and our plates remain very full. We must execute our annual program to standard, meet our customers' needs, operate safely and efficiently, take care of our people, train our employees, counsel and mentor subordinates, work openly with the public, enforce high, consistent standards, and exhibit Army Values in all we do. We do an excellent job, balancing all these requirements, and do get the mission accomplished...often under intense pressures...but how do we each accomplish our tasks?

How we get our mission accomplished is just as important as getting the job done to standard in the first place. What does this mean? The theme of the January 2002 South Atlantic Division Senior Leader's Conference was *Catch the Spirit...Release the Energy* and revolved around the "Fish Philosophy" as represented by the Pikes Place Fish Company at the City Market in Seattle, Washington. A video, that I hope to be able to share with the District, focused on how a group of fish peddlers get their job done with energy, passion, and fun. I found the video and their philosophy very inspiring and believe we can all practice their philosophy to some degree as we **Accomplish Our Mission** every day.

So what is this philosophy? It revolves around four simple principles: **Play, Make Their Day, Be There, and Choose Your Attitude**. These four principles can be applied to how we all deal with customers and also how we interact with our co-workers. **Play** — simply means that each of us should and can enjoy each day and have fun at work. This does not mean be unprofessional but find ways to have fun with co-workers and customers each day — they did a lot of fish tossing and laughing. **Make Their Day** — means have a positive impact on everyone you communicate with including co-workers, customers, and family. Do things that inspire or simply make people smile. **Be There** — relates to understanding what customers or co-workers want, or to acknowledge their needs and then take action to ensure you meet those needs. **Choose Your Attitude** — each and every day. The attitude we wake up with, bring to work, or take home at night is our own choice — no one else's — we choose how we will act — we are in control.

These four principles really boil down to **communications and relationships**. LTG Flowers continually emphasizes in our business that we succeed or fail based upon communications and relationships with each other, our customers, Congressional Leaders, stakeholders, and the general public. If we each make the decision to practice the "Fish Philosophy" each day, we cannot fail and will only enhance our relationships with everyone we come into contact with at work, at home, and at play.

The well known businessman, leadership guru, and author Tom Peters is credited with a quote "*Super people who trust one another, care about one another, and are committed to working hard together create great outcomes for each other and their customers.*"

The Charleston District and the Corps are made up of "Super People" who get the job done to standard — employing the tenets of the "Fish Philosophy" can only enhance **how we get the job done** and create even greater outcomes personally and professionally!

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Brig. Gen. Peter Madsen, SAD Commander proudly wears a Charleston District team cap.

*Story and Photos
by Alicia Gregory
Public Affairs Officer*

The new South Atlantic Division Commander, Brig. Gen. Peter Madsen, visited the Charleston District Office Jan. 17 to not only get an update on the District's operations, but also to conduct a Town Hall meeting with District team members.

At the Town Hall Meeting, the Division Commander presented several District team members with Division coins and handed out pins to Special Emphasis Program committee members. Team members who received coins were – Sara Brown, Jackie Easterling, Charlie Fore, Robin Socha, Barbara Barnette, and Barbara Gathers.

Since this was Madsen's first visit to the District, he started out the day discussing his goals and vision for SAD at the Town Hall meeting.

"My mission is preparing (the Division) for the future," said Madsen. He explained that a big part of this is building the regional team and developing the Division as a learning organization.

SAD Commander visits Charleston

He emphasized that the Division's prime interest was in serving the Nation and the customer, and this can be done more effectively through building the regional team.

"We can't afford to do everything in one district," said Madsen. He went on to explain that the best work the Corps does is in Emergency Management because we are willing to come together, regardless of our affiliations, to contribute what needs to be done.

Madsen also champions the idea of the Corps being a learning organization, explaining that we spend a lot of time doing, but not learning what we do.

"A good example of the importance of being a learning organization was shown during the '60 Minutes' segment about Sept. 11," explained

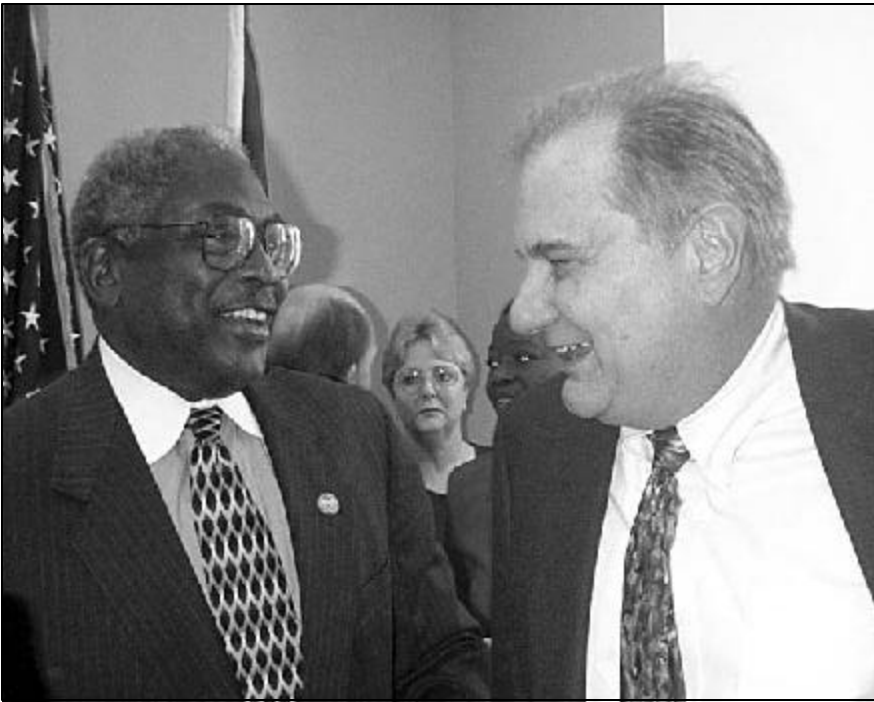
Madsen. According to the general, what the Corps learned from previous tragedies was put into action on the renovations at the Pentagon, and the results were evident.

Right after the Town Hall meeting, the District Engineer, senior staff and project managers briefed the general on the Charleston District, highlighting several key projects. Madsen then had lunch with the senior staff and took a brief tour of the Low Country Resident Office. The general ended his whirlwind tour of the District by visiting team members at their desks.

"He is a proven leader within the Army – in both tactical units and the Corps," said Lt. Col. Peter Mueller about the SAD Commander. "His vision, and his experience will make us better than we are today."



Brig. Gen. Peter Madsen, SAD Commander, speaks to team members during the District's Town Hall meeting.



Rep. James Clyburn shares a moment with Elmer Schwingen, deputy for Projects and Programs, before the District-sponsored luncheon celebrating diversity.

District Program celebrates Diversity

*Story and photos
by Alicia Gregory
Public Affairs Officer*

The Charleston District celebrated diversity with an entertaining and informative affair Jan. 16, that included music, a luncheon, and an address by Rep. James E. Clyburn that acknowledged Black History Month, Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday, and Unity Day.

"We decided to combine the celebrations this year for the congressman's visit," explained Barbara Gathers, Equal Employment Officer.

The District's Special Emphasis Program committee sponsored the event, under

Gather's direction. This is the congressman's third visit to the district. Previous visits included speaking at Martin Luther King, Jr. and Black History Month celebrations.

After opening remarks by Black Employment Program Manager Frank Russell, the attendees were treated to a inspiring rendition of "America the Beautiful" as sung by Patricia Miller, a secretary in Regulatory Division.

Clyburn used the song's lyrics, "...crown thy good with brotherhood...", as segue to discuss the importance of unity to Americans.

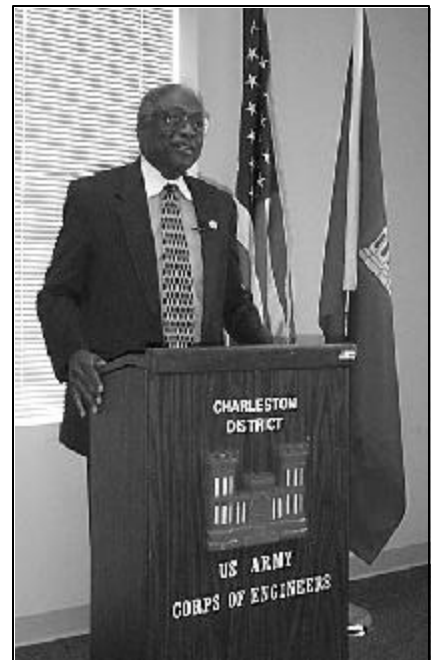
"September 11th was a wake up call to us that we are all in this together," said Clyburn. "We had

gotten away from things that make for an orderly society like respect for one another. Unity doesn't mean we have to agree on everything, it's our disagreements that make us strong, but we don't have to be disagreeable. We must decide to do our part to make our Nation better and make it our business to promote brotherhood."

Clyburn, who represents South Carolina's 6th District, went on to recount how his experience meeting Martin Luther King, Jr. influenced his life.

"I hope as we think of Martin Luther King, Jr., and his life, that we rededicate ourselves to the principles he stood for," said Clyburn. "He had a way of recognizing and respecting individuals and their contributions."

District Commander Lt. Col. Peter Mueller presented the congressman with an engraved paperweight to commemorate the day, and gave special thanks to Gathers and the Special Emphasis Program committee team — Joe



Rep. Clyburn addresses the importance of diversity to district employees during his visit.

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History of Black History Month

Barbara Gathers
EEO Officer

Americans have recognized black history annually since 1926, first as “Negro History Week” and later as “Black History Month.” We owe the celebration of Black History Month, and more importantly the study of black history, to Dr. Carter G. Woodson.

Born to parents who were former slaves, Woodson did not enroll in high school until age 20. He graduated in two years and later went on to earn a doctorate in history from Harvard University. However, he was disturbed to find that there was no mention of African-Americans in his history books. He decided to take on the challenge of writing African-Americans into the nation’s history. In 1915, he established the Association for

the Study of Negro Life and History (now called the Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History), and a year later, founded the Journal of Negro History. The idea for an observance honoring the accomplishment of African-Americans led to the establishment of Negro History Week in 1926. This initiative was designed to bring attention to the contributions of African-Americans throughout American history. In 1976, as part of the nation’s Bicentennial, the name was changed to Black History Month.

Woodson chose the month of February for this celebration because it included the birthdays of two persons whom he felt had drastically affected the lives of African-Americans: Abraham Lincoln (Feb. 12) and Frederick Douglass (Feb. 7). Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation, which abolished slavery in the



Dr. Carter G. Woodson

United States and Douglass escaped slavery in 1822.

Since 1926, the Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History has established the national theme for the month-long celebration of African-American History Month. The theme for this year’s celebration is “The Color Line Revisited: Is Racism Dead?” The Department of Defense has chosen the theme, “The African American Legacy: Contributions and Service in America’s Defense.”



Chris Mack (far left), Coastal Engineer in the Hydraulics, Coastal and FPM Section, demonstrates the District’s Flood Plain model for Rep. Clyburn.

Wilson, Jackie Easterling, Yvette Jenkins, Barbara Britz, Vernard Cleveland, Saulo Gaspi, Diresert Haynes, Patricia Miller, Cynthia Ruddy, Frank Russell, Gail Simmons, and Angie Williams — for working hard to make this year’s program a success.

Immediately following the program, the congressman and district team members were invited to enjoy a catered luncheon arranged by the SEP team.

The congressman finished up his visit by getting a short tour of the building, and a demonstration of the District’s Flood Plain Model by Chris Mack and Mitch Hall, who both work in the Hydraulics, Coastal, and Flood Plain Management Section.

SAD Senior Leaders Catch the Spirit

By Alicia Gregory
Public Affairs Officer

South Atlantic Division Commander, Brig. Gen. Peter Madsen, went fishing in Wilmington for objectives to support the Corps strategic goals and hooked his senior leaders into working hard and having fun at the Senior Leaders Conference.



The four-day conference, which began Jan. 28, was a bit “fishy” thanks to Deputy Division Commander, Lt. Col. Mark Held. Held pulled out all the

stops – dressing up in full fishing garb, complete with bright orange waders, and throwing fish.

“I knew I had a deputy who liked to fish, but I never realized the depth of his devotion,” joked Madsen.

The fish focus complemented this year’s theme, “Catch the Spirit, Release the Energy,” which was pervasive throughout the conference exemplified by things such as an original theme song written by Wilmington District’s Operations Chief Jim Butler, and a video focusing on the “Fish Philosophy” featuring Seattle’s famous Pike Place Fish Market.

The philosophy is based on four basic principles – play, make their day, be there, and choose your attitude. The main goal is to make work a fun place to be for employees and customers. Examples of the philosophy were

shown through a video of the fish market employees during interviews and at work.

This philosophy was heeded as attendees, who were grouped into teams named after various fish, began tackling the tough job of developing this year’s objectives.

The teams spent much of the conference trying to cull the many suggested important initiatives into a few accomplishable goals that worked in conjunction with the Corps’ Campaign Plan focusing on People, Process and Communication.

While Senior Leaders were working on the Division’s objectives, the Division’s Emerging Leaders, who were selected to participate in the conference, worked on developing a simple After-Action Review format.

The AAR is a significant part

of Madsen’s vision of a learning organization. Members of a learning organization evolve through continuously focusing on enhancing and expanding their collective awareness and capabilities, according to Peter Senge, author of *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*. Taking the time to capture information through creating AARs, greatly increases the Corps ability to accomplish our mission and become a learning organization, according to Madsen.

The Emerging Leaders completed a format for an AAR that starts with an introduction, establishing rules, reviewing objectives and standards, stakeholders’ perspective(s), and what happened. The focus is then shifted to *why* something happened. The team decided that the



South Atlantic Division implements Regional Leadership Development Program

*By Matt Laws
LDP Champion*

The South Atlantic Division, as a Regional Learning Organization, announced the initiation of a new Leadership Development Program at this year's Senior Leaders Conference.

Participation is open to team members in pay grades GS-07 through GS-13, equivalent Wage Grade positions, and military participants to the rank of Captain.

This new program will be conducted every calendar year beginning in February. It has seven specific goals:

(1) develop leadership skills,

(2) build teamwork, (3) build and develop relationships, (4) understand Corps business practices, (5) understand the environment in which the Corps operates, (6) learn the value of diversity, and (7) develop a Corps perspective.

The program consists of formal classroom training, site visits of civil and military program areas, a week in Washington D.C., a regional team project, reading assignments, and a class project with final presentation. Included in this program is the requirement of six to seven weeks of TDY travel associated with classroom training and field trips.

Participant goals are: learn a lot, challenge yourself, build the

regional team, complete course work and regional project, and (most importantly) have fun!

The first step for participants is to self nominate. Nomination packets are reviewed by the Commander to decide who will represent their District or the South Atlantic Division. The Charleston District has two slots for the 11-month-long program.

This year's participants are Mitch Hall, TS- DH, and Travis Hughes, RD-P. They began the program with a one-week orientation session in Atlanta on Feb. 24.

If you have any interest or questions about this program, contact your Branch Chief.

greatest amount of time, 50 percent, should be spent on how to improve what was reviewed and comments on the review itself.

Much to the pleasure of those in attendance, the Emerging Leaders team presented their AAR format in a skit poking fun at the senior staff.

A highlight of the conference was having retired Lt. Gen. Henry Hatch, former Chief of Engineers, speak to the group.

The entire group also heard presentations from the champions on last year's established objectives and on the new Regional Leadership Development Program.

The division champions have

taken the information gained at this year's conference and are currently working to develop objectives.

"This conference allowed us to open communications within the

division, put faces with names, and have fun," said Lt. Col. Peter Mueller, District Commander. "We were also able to establish key milestones and objectives to lead us into the future."

South Atlantic Division's District Engineers — (l-r) Col. Roger Gerber, Savannah; Col. Robert Keyser, Mobile; Col. James May, Jacksonville; Lt. Col. Peter Mueller, Charleston; and Col. James DeLony, Wilmington— sing the conference song, "Catch the Spirit," in their own special "Commander's Key."
(Courtesy Photo)



Shadow Day

*Photos by Alicia Gregory
Public Affairs Officer*

(right) Using a map of South Carolina, Joe Jones, chief of the Planning Section, shows his eight-year-old daughter, Meghan, the locations of several projects that he and his team are currently working on. His son, Zack, also participated in this year's program.

Several team member's brought their children to work Feb. 1 and Feb. 4 to celebrate "Shadow Day."

The annual event encourages participants —employees and children — to interact during normal work hours. This

"shadowing" gives the children a better idea of what the adults in their life do during a typical day.

"This is a good experience for the children," said James Struble, a biologist in Regulatory Division, "and it is nice to spend some one-on-one time with my child."



(left) Lynn Schwingen, a computer specialist in Information Management, gives twins, Andrew and Tom Rossi, a tour of the District's Computer Room. The boys, who attend Wando High School, are the nephews of Debbie Ward, finance and accounting officer.

(right) James Struble, a biologist in Regulatory Division, shows his son, Michael, how to use a satellite mapping program to find his house and school on the computer.

Michael, who is a 5th-grade student at Stiles Point Elementary School on James Island, says his father's job is fun because he gets to go out and dig in dirt.





District Digs In at Annual Oyster Roast

(above) Jennifer Blake, daughter of Lincoln Blake; Lincoln Blake, PM; Chris Dowling, RD; and Randy Fowler, RD are just a few of the 50 team members who participated in this year's Oyster Roast Mar. 1. The annual event is sponsored by the Castle Club as a morale building activity.

(left) Volunteers like Jim Henderson, TS, and Robin Crosby, OC, shown with District Commander Col. Peter Mueller worked hard to make this year's event a success.



Hot Competition at the Chili Cook-off

The Scholarship Committee raised \$425 at Chili Cook-off Mar. 13.

This year's winners were — Lt. Col. Peter Mueller, 1st place; Maj. David Diehl, 2nd place; and Paul Hinchcliff, 3rd place.

The committee also held a raffle and silent auction.

"Many thanks to the chili eaters, and everyone who participated in the raffle and silent action," said John Kassebaum, Scholarship Committee chairman. "The success of the Scholarship Fund depends on your generous contributions."





Charleston District participates in Engineer Week activities

In support of National Engineers Week, Feb. 17-25, Charleston District team members took the opportunity to share their expertise with the area schools.

The National Society of Professional Engineers established National Engineers Week in 1951 and thousands of engineers, engineering students, teachers, and leaders in government and business participate in the week-long celebration with the purpose of increasing the public's understanding of the engineering

profession.

This year the annual celebration, which coincided with George Washington's birthday in recognition of our first president's contributions to the engineering profession, focused on reaching young students.

Both Maj. David Diehl, deputy district engineer, and Daryln Grigsby, a civil engineer in the Technical Services Division, spoke to area high school students about the engineering profession.

Elmer Schwingen, deputy for

the Programs and Project Management, and Paul Hinchcliff (pictured), a biologist in Regulatory Division, judged a local elementary school science fair.

"I am proud of our efforts to inform the public of what we, as a public engineering organization, do for the Nation and the state of South Carolina," said Lt. Col. Peter Mueller, district commander. "This is yet another way we can celebrate the contributions of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers."

CorpsPath Kicks Off

The Corps of Engineers has a roadmap for doing business, and it is called CorpsPath.

Charleston District team members were introduced to CorpsPath by District Commander Lt. Col. Peter Mueller at a Town Hall meeting March 11.

CorpsPath is a tool that was developed to increase and enhance team member's knowledge of the overall history and mission of the Corps and show ways to improve how we conduct business.

There are 15 main modules

within the five focus areas of Capable Workforce, Knowledge Management, Business Process, Corporate Relationships, and Army Support, in addition to sections on the history and mission of the Corps.

Team members will be able to access the training program through the Local Area Network. Instructions are posted on the District Intranet site under the title "CorpsPath."

The district is scheduled to have training completed by July 31.



*District Dispatch
Spring 2002*



*By Mark Turner
Safety Officer*

It's Spring and love is in the air, but it is not the only thing in the air this time of year. The nasty germs carrying the cold and flu viruses are also out and about in strength. Most often these viruses are not life threatening but they can be a safety concern for your workplace because they can take you out of commission for days just like a workplace accident. One can even say the cold and flu can be worse than a workplace accident because they are contagious and can affect everyone in your workplace, including the customers who do business with you.

The flu, or influenza, is an airborne virus spread from one person to another by droplets from coughing or sneezing. Since the virus is airborne anyone breathing the same air as an infected person can also become infected. Persons who do have the flu should be reminded of what they were taught in pre-school, cover your mouth when

Tis the season for colds

you cough, sneeze into a tissue, and wash your hands often. By "catching" the cough or sneeze in your hand or a tissue, the germs will not enter the air and be carried to innocent bystanders. By washing your hands, you will dispose of the germs without allowing them to infect others. Infected people should also be considerate to others and try to avoid unneeded contact with them, as the flu can be highly contagious.

Those who are not yet infected can reduce their chances of becoming infected by taking some simple precautions. If you cannot avoid infected people, you can avoid their germs. Do not touch surfaces they have touched, especially if they have coughed or sneezed in their hands and then touched the surfaces. Consider light switches, doorknobs, computer keyboards and telephones as potentially germ carrying. These surfaces can be easily cleaned of any germs they may have. A spray disinfectant may help to put you at ease and rid many surfaces of a variety of germs and viruses.

If your interaction with other people is high or your tendency to become ill with influenza is extreme, a preventative vaccination is available. Usually this vaccine should have been admin-

istered months ago to be most effective. A variety of treatments are also available to lessen the discomfort caused by the cold or flu. A standard rule for good health is to drink plenty of water. During this cold and flu season it may be beneficial to drink even more water than usual. There are also myriad of "grandma's secret remedies" that can be used including the favorite chicken soup.

Although flu symptoms are felt throughout the body, the flu virus lives and multiplies primarily in the lungs. This leads to the virus being airborne. Common symptoms of influenza include the feeling of fatigue, a fever of up to 104 degrees, muscle aches, joint pain, loss of appetite, headache, and coughing. Stuffy nose and diarrhea or vomiting are not common symptoms of influenza. Upset stomach and vomiting are often called "stomach flu" but are not influenza symptoms and are caused by other microorganisms.

If you feel any flu symptoms coming on, consider it the onset of the illness and treat yourself. Also treat your co-workers to good health and respect by protecting them from your contagious condition.

This time of the year is for spreading love, not the nasty cold and flu viruses in your workplace.



(from left) OVEST team members Kelly Jolly, Warren Withers, Camille Mallory-Krolkowski, Eara Merritt and Fred McAuley discuss an ongoing project. (Photo by Jonas Jordan, Savannah District)

*By Karin Martinez
former Savannah District
Public Affairs Specialist*

The Office of the Chief of Engineers Value Engineering Study Team (OVEST), a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers asset, recently became part of the Charleston District.

OVEST is a team of eight multi-disciplined engineers and an architect who are headquartered in Charleston with team members also located in Savannah whose mission is threefold: (1) support the Corps of Engineers' overall Value Engineering program; (2) perform professional VE studies on large and complex projects Corpswide; and (3) assist field-operating agencies in the area of VE.

Value engineering, studying the estimated cost of a project and finding the best value for the customer's money, is a federal requirement by public law on all military projects \$1 million or greater, and civil projects \$2 million and greater. According to Eara Merritt, chief of OVEST, the team

does value engineering all over the country and internationally, handling 40 to 50 projects per year.

"Our work with OVEST is very exciting," Merritt said. This staff sees as many projects in a year as some engineers will see during an entire career. We work all over the country – about 40 percent on military projects, 50 percent on civil projects, and 10 percent for other agencies such as the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Energy.

"OVEST works on every kind of project the Corps is involved in," he said. "In fact, we encourage our clients to give us the most difficult jobs because of our level of expertise. We don't mind the high visibility." The team seldom has to turn down a job, he added.

Value engineering officers within the Corps and other agencies OVEST deals with have three options when confronted with a new project: use in-house professionals only, use an architectural and engineering firm, or use OVEST. Because they have options, Merritt said, OVEST

Office of Value Engineering Study Team. . . becomes part of the District

must continually develop relationships with its customers and actively seek new clients.

"We are a customer-service organization," he said.

"Customers don't have to choose us, but we let them know we have a quality approach that gets results, and we're proud of that."

That quality approach has paid off. The team was the recipient of the prestigious Hammer Award, a special recognition from Former Vice President Al Gore, which goes to federal government teams who exhibit values such as putting the customer first, cutting red tape, empowering employees and getting back to basics. In addition, OVEST has received two Department of Defense awards for value engineering.

Upon receipt of a project, a team member is selected to become the study manager, according to Charlie Fore, a mechanical engineer for 22 years and OVEST team member for 14 years. The manager makes all arrangements for a study, coordinates with all study members, and prepares a report with proposals to the customer upon completion. Arrangements include coordinating with the

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Employee of the Month



January —

Robin Crosby, Legal Assistant, OC

Robin Crosby's selection as the January Employee of the Month is due to her boundless energy and exceptional performance on all tasks she is assigned.

As the legal assistant in Office of Counsel, she provides the administration of the Freedom of Information Act program and the Corps of Engineers Automated Legal Systems. She also provides litigation support to the District's attorneys.

In addition to her normal duties, she was responsible for the implementation of the District's ATMP and has been a strong supporter of Castle Club activities and fundraisers.

February —

Cynthia Craven, Secretary, Low Country Resident Office, TS

Cynthia Craven is described as dependable and dedicated. She has gained the respect and appreciation of not only her co-workers in the Low Country Resident Office, but also many other District team members.

She works with total dedication to mission accomplishments and strives to produce the highest quality products possible.

Cynthia is a real pleasure to work with and a major attribute to the organization.



March —

Jimmy Hadden, Project Manager, PM-M

Jimmy Hadden recently transferred into the Project Management Branch of the Project Management Division.

He has done an outstanding job of not only picking up, but also leading several high-impact projects, such as Savannah River Site, Risk Assessment Methodology for Dams (RAM-D), and Charleston County Commissioners of Public Works. In addition, he has taken the lead on several Continuous Authority Program projects and did an exceptional job in representing the Charleston District at the Mini Hearings.

Regulatory

From Page 1

With the arrival of Hurricanes Floyd and Irene, the office assumed a new role as a field site for Emergency Management and was tasked with interagency coordination with FEMA and the State of South Carolina Emergency Preparedness Division.

In December 1999, Brandon Stutts, a biologist with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resource Conservation Service, was hired to complete the initial hiring goals of the office.

"The Columbia field office continues to provide timely service to the midlands and upstate of the State of South Carolina and to seek new methodologies to improve service and the accomplishment of the Charleston District Regulatory Division mission," said Parker.

Last June, the district opened a field office in Conway, S.C. Two new district employees, Kevin Montgomery and Elizabeth Jackson, staffed the two-man office.

Although they had a major task of furnishing and equipping their new place, with some help from the district headquarters, they started digging in to their large workload by mid-July.

Both Montgomery and Jackson worked with fellow biologists assigned to Horry County, Nat Ball and Paul Hinchcliff, to get up to speed before taking over what Horry County residents like to call "The Independent Republic."

The team is in the field daily to meet with consultants to delineate and/or verify wetlands and other waters of the U.S., and to seeking resolutions for violations. They also meet with small landowners, large developers, County



Brandon Stutts, a biologist in the Columbia Field Office, uses a Munsell color chart to determine if his soil sample is hydric or not. A Munsell chart helps researchers describe the color of pottery or soil. (Photo by Les Parker, Charleston District)

personnel, and State and Federal employees while conducting their daily activities. They also spend time riding around the County doing surveillance work to familiarize themselves with the area, or in the office answering the public's questions and calls. They also spend a lot of time studying to increase their knowledge of hydric soils, hydrophytic vegetation, and our laws and regulations.

According to Jackson, the advantage of a field office is that the commute to and from the Horry County area is eliminated providing far more "field time" each day to look at more sites, thus providing improved public service.

Although both field offices do not have ready access to historical files on many of the area sites (these files are located in the

district headquarters), a project is underway to create electronic copies of all the files on CDs that will be kept at the field offices.

Another challenge these offices face is not being able to speak to fellow biologists, team leaders, and supervisors face-to-face; however, with the help of technology, they can usually find someone via e-mail, cell phone, or pager.

"A field office by its very name is remote and removed from its central headquarters," said Parker. "Its ability to communicate effectively while mobile and yet interdependent is essential to its survival."

Welcome to ...



Erlene Weathersbee joined the Resource Management Office, Budget, Programs, Management Branch on Dec. 31 as an accounting technician.

Erlene came to the District from SPAWAR and was previously with DFAS, Charleston. In addition to serving as the District

Customer Service Representative, ensuring payroll is transmitted every two weeks, she handles all District funding, direct and reimbursable funding.

She resides in Hanahan with her husband, Harry M. Weathersbee (Mackie). The couple have two sons, Robert and Philip, and two grandsons, Trenton and Philip, Jr. We are excited about Erlene's arrival and the 20 years of experience she brings with her.



George Ebai joined the Project Management Division, Planning Branch on Jan. 1 as an economist.

George is originally from Cameroon, West Africa and has been living in the U.S. for the past 16 years. He comes to the Corps from the University of

Missouri-Columbia where he was working on his doctorate in agricultural economics.

Married with three children, George is a big soccer fan and loves watching matches as much as playing in them. Although he has not played in years, he is looking for a local league to join.



Selma Moore joined the Project Management Division, Planning Branch on Jan. 7 as an economist.

Selma is originally from St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, but has lived in Stone Mountain, Ga for the past 12 years. She completed

her master's in economics from Georgia State University in Atlanta this past December.

Selma lives in West Ashley and is looking forward to getting to know the District team members.



Team members line up for an Italian culinary experience in the 3rd floor conference room

Mangiare!Mangiare!

By Lisa Metheney
Scholarship Committee

February usually brings to mind thoughts of roses and chocolates and hearts. But on Feb. 8 it was aroma, not amore, which filled the halls of the 3rd floor as the Scholarship Committee hosted their annual Little Taste of Italy Spaghetti Lunch.

The lunch, a regular on the Scholarship Committee fundraising agenda for three years now, drew 42 hungry participants. Pasta lovers had their choice of three sauces donated by district employees Jim Whiteman, Gary McAlister and Lisa Metheney. Salad, garlic bread and sodas rounded out the meal.

Why do people participate in the Scholarship Committee lunches? The most popular response was "I have (or will have) college age children and the scholarships, no matter the amount, help with the cost of education." And why donate sauce for the spaghetti lunch? Jim Whiteman said it best — "There's a little Italian, or is it Chef Boyardee, in all of us."

The Little Taste of Italy raised just over \$200 for the Scholarship Fund. The Committee would like to thank everyone who participated, and especially those folks who donated sauce. The Committee's major event, the annual Chili Cook-off, will be March 13.

OVEST

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project engineer and whatever specialists are required to assemble the team, and thoroughly analyzing the project to find where the customer can get the most value for his money.

"There's a lot of research needed on the study manager's part. We have to quickly become experts on the projects in a short time," Fore said. "We normally bring the team together for the study one week and have the report written by the following week."

Once the team is finished, a report is submitted to the customer and the customer then implements recommendations as needed. OVEST has a high implementation rate, one Fore considers to be "the best." One example of this is the Central Indianapolis Waterfront Urban Reach project.

The project incorporated the White River riverfront into the community as a resource linked to work and leisure life of both inhabitants and visitors to Indianapolis. The key proposal provides a "Great Lawn" effect to replace a paved riverbank. The study provided a more environmentally conscious natural grassed riverbank, a significant quality increase. In addition to improving the project, the study reduced the project cost from \$22.3 million to \$8.5 million a 13.8 million dollar savings. This allowed the local sponsor to add another phase of urban renewal earlier than previously planned.

"We frequently save money and end up with a better product," said Fred McAuley, a general engineer for 28 years and OVEST team member for 13 years. "We



Close collaboration is a crucial part of the review process for OVEST team members. Warren Withers and Camille Mallory-Krolikowski, use this review process to help customers save millions of dollars. (Photo by Jonas Jordan, Savannah District)

help officials select the better way to do things."

In existence since 1984, OVEST has built quite a reputation, completing more than 450 studies, and reviewing approximately \$2 billion in construction each year. Merritt said the team is getting into more nontraditional projects such as building embassies, constructing an underground nuclear test facility, and highly scientific testing. In addition, they have studied 40 flood protection projects for the city of New Orleans, plus five projects in Korea for the Far East District.

"Value engineering is a big responsibility and an important part of all projects. First of all, it's required by law," Merritt said. "But it also gives you a second look. Many times, designers are driven by time and budget constraints. You have to look at every aspect of the project. Designers usually only look at their parts.

"That's where OVEST comes in; we – along with designers, us-

ers, project managers, local sponsors and major commands – look at and analyze everything to make sure it all works together. Designers become part of the innovative process of finding the best 'value' ways to do something."

"The earlier we get in on a project, the better," McAuley added. "Change becomes much more costly later on."

"Our key to success is the heavy involvement of the user, the local sponsor and project management," he said.

"Everyone works together to give the best product in the end. Our goal is to be a benchmark for the district program; we want to make a positive impact on the projects and VE program throughout the Corps of Engineers."

Editor's Note— This article is an updated version of a piece that previously appeared in the November 1999 issue of Savannah District's "Castle."

OPM offers Long-Term Health Insurance

Over the past year the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has provided updates on the progress of implementing Long-Term Care Insurance (LTCI) for the Federal Family. OPM has announced that John Hancock and Metropolitan Life have been selected as the carriers who will offer this valuable new benefit. The two companies have formed a joint venture company that will be dedicated to the implementation and administration of the Federal LTC program.

There will be two opportunities for eligible individuals (active and retired civilian employees and uniformed service members) to enroll in LTCI provided by LTC Partners. The first opportunity, the Early Enrollment Program, will be held from March 25 through May 15. The Early Enrollment Program will allow eligible members of the Federal Family who already appreciate the need for LTCI to enroll during that time frame. It is important to note that not all plan features will be available during Early Enrollment. Premium payments may be made to the provider through automatic bank withdrawal and direct billing; however, payroll deduction will not be available. Premium costs, not yet available, will be announced before March 25.

OPM also plans to provide a calculator on their website, www.opm.gov/insure/ltc to assist with decisions about LTCI.



The second opportunity to enroll will be the first LTCI open season to be held from July 1 through December 31. At that time all benefits options under the program will be available and payroll deduction will be implemented. Those who enroll under the Early Enrollment Program may switch to payroll deduction during the LTCI open season.

OPM has determined that the provider, LTC Partners, is solely responsible for all core functions that support this program. Since LTCI may be unfamiliar to many people, employees should rely on the experts at LTC Partners to field any questions that they have about long term care in general or about any aspect of the plan. Personnelists and/or Army Benefits Center – Civilian (ABC-C) counselors are not to answer any

questions regarding this insurance other than to direct employees to the provider.

Employees who are interested in receiving information about long-term care will be able to subscribe to a series of informational bulletins being produced by LTC Partners. Post cards for requesting a subscription will be sent through normal distribution channels. LTC Partners will also provide information regarding enrollment, including brochures, meeting notification, and applications for coverage. Enrollment will be made directly with LTC Partners. Enrollments cannot be accepted through any servicing personnel office or the ABC-C. Employees may also contact LTC Partners to subscribe to the bulletin series by calling: 1-800-LTC-FEDS (1-800-582-3337) or via the LTC web site: www.ltcfeds.com. Employees with questions about LTCI will be directed to these sources for information.

The first of three satellite broadcasts is planned for March 6 to provide information about the Federal Long-Term Care Insurance Program. The broadcast will feature national experts discussing what long-term care is, the odds of needing care, and what options are available to pay for long term care. OPM Director Kay Coles James will explain the importance of the Federal Long-Term Care Insurance Program.

Army Knowledge Online unveils 'Collaboration Center'

*By Patrick A. Swan
Army News Service*

A "collaboration center" to let Army Knowledge Online customers hold Internet conferences with other users became a standard AKO feature in February.

The center serves as a "chat room" for users to discuss specific Army issues. Such conference rooms enable an AKO user and other individuals to talk to each other simultaneously.

"This is part of the continuing evolution of AKO," said Col. Robert L. Coxe, G-6's (Communications and Information Systems) chief technical officer. "We wanted to give soldiers a place to either exchange concepts and ideas or to be able to discuss a particular document online."

Since chat is a part of AKO Instant Messenger, users must be running AKO Instant Messenger to chat. By creating a chat room as a "moderated" room, only operators and moderators can participate, or "speak," in that room.

"When you create a chat room, you decide who does what," said David Hale, AKO's chief technician.

Coxe added that the Collaboration Center is both secure and persistent. Thus, when a given chat is completed, its text does not vanish. Rather, the chat room administrator can edit, save and archive the session as a text document for later viewing by anyone given access.

A systems administrator with



the 1st Armored Division in Germany recently praised the AKO collaboration center as, "pretty damn cool."

"Tell the gang (AKO folks) that put it up 'Good Job!' and pat them on the back," said Spc. David A. McLemore, of 1st Brigade, 1st AD. "My guys used the (heck) out of AKO-S (the secret-level AKO site) at the recent Victory Focus (V Corps exercise). A lot of them like using the Web mail there better than having to use their SIPRnet (secret-level, organic) e-mail accounts. (With AKO-S), they can go to any SIPRnet machine and check their e-mail. And since they don't have to go through my shop to get an account, they can move a lot faster."

"I can see it now," McLemore added, "entire chat channels dedicated to exercises/new computer systems so that when soldiers run into a problem on the systems they can put a 'shout' out for help."

While the Collaboration Center was designed to help soldiers in

coordinating documents, concepts or information papers, Coxe said he really had no preconceived notion on how it might be used in practice.

"We are going to be surprised," he said. "Soldiers have an amazing way of figuring out practical uses for themselves independent of what we designers might think."

For instance, Coxe said, soldiers are using the chat rooms to conduct after-action reviews. He also described how some military police use it for briefing off-duty shifts online. Soldiers in those off-duty shifts participate from home or remote computer workstations, rather than assembling en masse at the MP station.

The Collaboration Center's conference rooms complement the AKO Instant Messenger, which allows users to communicate through a Web browser with other Bantu Messenger users [the AKO default standard], and users of ICQ, Yahoo! Messenger and MSN Messenger on Windows, Macintosh and Unix. An instant message is a private, two-way

communication online between a user and others.

Hale said AKO Instant Messenger is the only instant messenger that allows users to send instant messages to users on ICQ, Yahoo! Messenger, MSN Messenger, and Bantu.

"AKO Instant Messenger requires no software to install, and all settings are stored on AKO's servers, making it the easiest Instant Messenger solution for users who move between computers often," he said.

AKO Instant Messenger is a secure means to maintain privacy, Hale said, because it uses an encrypted protocol between client and server, so users can be sure that messages sent between AKO Instant Messenger users are not

being read by other people.

Nevertheless, AKO Instant Messenger works unbelievably well through firewalls and proxy servers, Hale said.

"In many cases, AKO Instant Messenger is the only way to connect to ICQ, MSN, and Yahoo!," he said.

The AKO Instant Messenger contact list is similar to other instant messenger contact and buddy lists. It also automatically synchronizes with one's MSN Messenger and Yahoo! contact list whenever connected to their networks.

In addition, Hale said any changes a user has made to his contacts or blocked list from another client will automatically be updated. The exception is ICQ,

which stores its contacts list on a user's computer, and not on a central server. As a result, there is currently no way for AKO Instant Messenger to import ICQ contact lists.

A user's contact list is a list of people to whom one can easily send instant messages. They could be co-workers, relatives or other people one knows. By running AKO Instant Messenger, users can see if their contacts are online and available for a conversation.

A contact list can contain people from any instant messaging network.

There is no limit to the number of AKO Instant Messenger contacts. Users may have up to 1,000 contacts per group, and an unlimited number of groups.

AKO is a knockout on-line tool

Army Knowledge On-line (AKO) provides the army a web-based tool that allows soldiers and civilians to share knowledge and work more effectively. By facilitating knowledge sharing across the army, AKO allows individuals to spend more time analyzing versus collecting information, thus assisting in the production of higher quality products, recommendations and decisions.

It is important to understand that establishing an AKO account is part of a larger Army strategy to leverage Army knowledge and share information among and between military and civilian personnel across the Army. By registering with AKO,

USACE personnel have access to information not available elsewhere.

All authorized personnel will be able to access over 1,500 Information Technology, Business Skills, and Interpersonal Skills courses from any location, around the clock (24/7) and have access to personal mentoring for all certifications and many other programs.

According to Gene Maak, a Hydrologist in the Technical Services Division, using AKO's on-line courses have helped him keep his skills honed and learn new skills.

In addition to its many programs, registered users receive the free monthly SmartForce

Army newsletter. Also, a copy of the Program Listing (course catalog) is available upon request by reply email.

Some of the benefits of AKO are the following:

- Customizable, encrypted, personal portal page for each soldier and DA civilian.

- Quick access to Army forms and regulations, installations, change-of-station information.

- Latest Army news, and AKO knowledge centers.

- Powerful search engine that indexes over 750,000 documents.

- Free email

Source: U.S. Army Web Site

Around the District

Congratulations

...to **Jon Jellema**, OC, on the birth of his son, Mark Calvin Jellema, on Feb. 23. The baby weighed 7 lbs. 2 oz. and was 20 1/4 inches long.

...to **Travis Hughes**, RD, on his marriage to the Michele Leigh Laney on Feb. 2.

... to **Angie Williams**, LM, on the birth of her niece, Jalynn Cierra Williams, on Feb. 11. The baby weighed 7 lbs, 3 ozs. and was 19 1/2 inches long.

... to Patrick Wilson, son of **Joe Wilson**, TS. Patrick, who came in 30th overall, was the first American Junior in the Sunfish World Sailing Championship in Antigua, British Virgin Island, last

October.

He competed against 96 world-class sailors, from 14 countries, in the week-long event.

...to **Elizabeth Jackson**, Conway Field Office, on her engagement to Rhett Bickley, a game warden for SCDNR. The couple plan on a fall wedding.

...to **Nia Dozier**, CT, on her engagement to Petty Officer 1st Class Dwight Newton, Jr., an instructor at the Naval Submarine School in Groton, Conn. The couple plan on a January wedding.

...to **Paul Crosby**, retiree, on the birth of his granddaughter, Morgan Paige, on Jan. 9. The baby weighed 7 lbs. 13 oz. and was 20 inches long.

...to **Lisa Metheney**, PM, and

Gene Maak, TS, on their selection to participate in a five-month, long-term training assignment in USACE Leadership Development Program.

Metheney will be working at the Europe District in Wiesbaden, Germany. Maak will work at the Transatlantic Programs Center in Winchester, Va.

Condolences

...to **Tom Milne**, IM, on the death of his grandmother Jan. 17.

...to **Charlie Harbin**, TS, on the death of his father Jan. 15.

...to **Margie Brown**, IM, on the death of her mother-in-law Feb. 5

Promotions

Tracy Hurst, RD

Nat Ball, RD

Brandon Stutts, RD

Travel Changes Implemented

*Diane Carter
Logistics Officer*

Two of the more recent travel changes impacting all employees are the new mileage rates and legislation regarding personal use of frequent flyer miles.

Effective Jan. 21, the rate per mile for driving your car on temporary duty, and for official duty locally, increases from \$.34 to \$.36. Employees should

bear in mind that the increased rate is only effective when no government furnished vehicle is available, or it is more advantageous to the government. Mileage rates for your car are established based on cost data collected by GSA. The TDY mileage rate can never be higher than the rate allowed by the IRS, which, at this time, is \$.365 per mile for cars.

There is mixed news for frequent flyers. With the signing of the National Defense Authoriza-

tion Act, federal military and civilian employees may keep promotional items (including frequent travel benefits such as points or miles, upgrades, or access to carrier clubs or facilities) earned when traveling in an official capacity.

While this is good news for federal travelers, employees are advised that the issue of taxability of frequent flyer miles has not yet been resolved. It is suggested that employees who use these travel benefits keep a record of their redemptions.